

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 2170

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AR (VICENTE SOLANO LIMA)

SUBJECT: SOLANO LIMA TO BE RECTOR OF BA UNIVERSITY

1. SUMMARY: APPOINTMENT OF SOLANO LIMA AS RECTOR OF UNIVERSITY IS A HAPPY ONE. SCOPE OF HIS JOB AS SECRETARY GENERAL OF PRESIDENCY HAS DIMINISHED, BUT IT WAS NECESSARY FOR HIM TO STAY ON AS A CONDUIT TO THE OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES AND AS A GUARANTEE TO THEM OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO MAINTAIN DIALOGUE. HE CAN NOW CONTINUE TO SERVE AS GUARANTEE BUT AT SAME TIME PERFORM USEFUL FUNCTION AT UNIVERSITY. END SUMMARY.

2. VICENTE SOLANO LIMA ANNOUNCED LAST NIGHT (MARCH 25) THAT HE HAD ACCEPTED JOB AS RECTOR OF THE HUGE UNIVERSITY OF BUENOS AIRES. HE WILL MAINTAIN HIS PRESENT POSITION WHILE HE SERVES AS RECTOR.

3. UNDER THE NEW UNIVERSITY LAW THE APPOINTMENT WHICH LIMA HAS ACCEPTED AS "NORMALIZING" RECTOR CAN LAST FOR A MAXIMUM OF 18 MONTHS. AT THAT TIME, THE UNIVERSITY'S SUPERIOR COUNCIL WILL NAME THE PERMANENT RECTOR.

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4. SOLANO LIMA IS ONE OF THE VERY FEW PEOPLE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH STUDENTS, GOVERNMENT, AND OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES.

HE WOULD SEEM, THEN, TO BE AN IDEAL CHOICE AND PROBABLY HAS A BETTER CHANCE THAN MOST OF RETURNING THE UNIVERSITY SITUATION TO NORMAL. THAT HE WILL RETAIN HIS POSITION AS SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENCY IS NOT SURPRISING. WHEN ORIGINALLY APPOINTED TO THE JOB, INTERNAL POLITICS WERE ENVISAGED AS HIS MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY. AS THE MONTHS PASSED, HOWEVER, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE MAJOR INTERNAL POLITICAL PROBLEM RESIDED NOT IN THE OPPOSITION PARTIES OR THE MILITARY (SECTORS WITH WHICH LIMA MIGHT HAVE WORKED VERY EFFECTIVELY) BUT RATHER IN THE PERONIST MOVEMENT ITSELF, WHICH WAS BADLY SPLIT. THIS PLACED SOLANO LIMA AT A DIS-ADVANTAGE, FOR AS A NON-PERONIST, HE HAD NO DISCIPLINARY POWERS OVER MOVEMENT AND WAS IN A POOR POSITION TO ACT AS INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN PERONIST LEFT AND RIGHT. HENCE, NOT BECAUSE HE HAD LOST PERON'S CONFIDENCE, BUT BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF THE POLITICAL SCENE, THE SCOPE OF SOLANO LIMA'S JOB STEADILY DIMINISHED. HE REMAINED (AND REMAINS) SOMETHING OF AN INDISPENSABLE FIGURE, HOWEVER, AS A CONDUIT TO THE NON-PERONIST POLITICAL PARTIES, AND, INDEED, AS A GUARANTEE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO A POLICY OF DIALOGUE AND CONSENSUS.

5. SOURCES CLOSE TO SOLANO LIMA CONFIRMED TO AN EMBOFF SOME TEN DAYS AGO THAT SOLANO LIMA HAD IN FACT PRESENTED HIS RESIGNATION DURING THE CORDOBA CRISIS. IT WAS THE ONLY HONORABLE THING HE COULD DO SINCE HE WAS TOTALLY OPPOSED TO THE INITIAL TACTICS USED THERE AND BELIEVED THEY UNDERMINED HIS CREDIBILITY WITH THE OTHER PARTIES. PERON TALKED HIM OUT OF RESIGNING AND (WHETHER THERE WAS A CASUAL RELATIONSHIP OR NOT) CHANGED TACTICS. EVEN SO, SOURCES TOLD EMBOFF, SOLANO LIMA WISHED TO RETIRE TO PRIVATE LIFE BUT WOULD NOT RESIGN UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH WOULD EMBARRASS GOVERNMENT. THIS, IN EFFECT, MEANT THAT HE COULD NOT LEAVE, FOR THAT WOULD HAVE CAUSED GREAT CONCERN AMONG OPPOSITION PARTIES--AND ESPECIALLY WITHIN THE UCR.

6. APPOINTMENT AS UNIVERSITY RECTOR, THEN, WOULD SEEM A LOGICAL SOLUTION. SOLANO LIMA WILL CONTINUE TO ACT AS GOVERNMENT'S GUARANTEE TO THE OTHER PARTIES BUT WILL ALSO
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HAVE IMPORTANT TASK AT UNIVERSITY--A TASK, MOREOVER, WITH A TIME LIMIT SO THAT AT END OF 18 MONTHS HE MIGHT MORE EASILY RETIRE TO PRIVATE LIFE IF HE WISHES TO DO SO. JOB AS RECTOR WILL CERTAINLY BE A DELICATE ONE. STUDENTS WILL BE PUSHING HIM TO MAINTAIN PUIGGROS' POLICIES. GOVERNMENT, ON OTHER HAND, WILL BE INSISTING UPON A MORE CONSERVATIVE APPROACH.
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